

INTELLIGENT DEVELOPMENT AND CONNECTEDNESS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

At present spatial development, the focus of the research, is directed to the regions' development and establishing competitive environment of their territory. In this exposition the authors explore innovations and their influence on regional development improvement. The purpose of the research is the potential of the investment policies and innovative environment for creating terms of life quality increasing in regions. The authors try to create a methodology for enforcing the process of the regions' intelligent development. The authors outline the tendencies related to regional intelligent development and influence on national territory development.

Keywords: innovations, regional development, environment, model, system, selectiveness, modelling

JEL: M21, M38, O18, R11, R53

Introduction

Against the background of the economic downturn and slow pace of development in many segments of the industry at a global level (including in the Bulgarian country), the trading companies demonstrate a significant business activity. This activity is caused by the imposition of new business models based on electronic technologies and local spaces that have reliable information accessibility. Especially after the appearance of COVID-19, the world's major retail chains continue to expand their territorial presence, opening new hypermarkets in the electronic environment. Of course, this requires new logistics and management of goods and services in spatial and territorial terms. In addition, it can be noted that a process of internal migration of the population

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from mega-urbanized areas to less populated rural areas and suburban areas is beginning. This brings to the fore new infrastructural problems that are related to the level of public works in the modern nation state. For example, the Biden Plan for a giant investment in the infrastructure of the United States, which will focus on repairs and construction of roads and railways, highways, bridges, high-speed Internet. In practice, we are witnessing two processes. The first is the process of technological change in trade and the way of world consumption and increased internal migration of the population, which in practice can lead to demographic change on a global scale. These new processes lead to a change in the material and technical supply of the population and, above all, a readjustment of the world geo-economy in a new logistical direction, which is also related to the need to restructure a number of sectors and industries. Undoubtedly, this will lead to a change in the time factor, which will set new relations in the direction of raw materials-production-consumption, and hence a new role of marketing technologies and connectivity models.

In these years of transition to the new economy, an important problem remains the process of digitalization and technological change as a challenge, but also the awareness of this process by local businesses. In practice, we are facing new economic conditions under which it is necessary to derive the socio-economic profile of individual regions. This approach will provide the opportunity in the national space to form the main cores of the national economy. The way to this change is not only to optimize operating costs, but also to define a production profile and provide services that are in line with business development and living standards. Thus, along with spatial policies, it is necessary to move towards a more targeted digitalization of companies. So that at the same time to develop human capital and rationally use information systems to improve their activities. On the other hand, public administration needs to effectively implement e-government in order to reduce bureaucracy and possible corrupt practices. This will facilitate the work of companies in financial planning and budgeting, application integration and development of mobile solutions. In the regional aspect, this will allow the business to develop more autonomously and emphasize its potential in the development of its activities in the long run. This will affect migration processes. The creation of alternatives for a better life in the individual regions will certainly have a restraining effect on migration processes and at the same time improve the living environment at the regional level. In this direction, the management of regional development, in addition to infrastructure and transport accessibility, is related to the role of innovation as an essential factor in promoting regional development. The transition of the regional economy to a new model of technological development is a process that requires awareness of regional business and public administration at the local level. This process means

not only the creation of a regulatory framework, but also investment in education and its adaptation to new realities.

Interconnectivity between regional development and intelligent environment

In this direction, the electronicization of services for economically active people means reducing time, organization and proper planning of processes. The need for the state to promote the process of electronicization is a more comprehensive supervision of business processes and at the same time achieving a higher and more effective fiscal policy. Moreover, the process of electrification creates opportunities for better service to regional business.

The classification of relations in e-government makes it possible to establish the role of e-business, e-commerce and the emergence of a new profile of the regional economy as functions in the overall business model of socio-economic development. This makes it possible to formulate a business strategy in accordance with market trends. From a geoeconomic point of view, the combination of real and e-commerce technologies has overcome a number of existing deficits. In reality, a new type of problems related to material and technical supply has emerged, which has gained new intensity and in the period 2020 – 2022 the supply system has been disrupted globally. This, on the other hand, may provoke the need for new economic change, which will require the creation of new productions in the regions to supply the relevant goods and services to local businesses, which in the current slowdown in supply are slowing down production and hence it reduces its competitiveness. In practice, it becomes dependent on supplies and so demand increases, and hence the prices of finished products. This will undoubtedly encourage businesses to new types of solutions and investments in local production or smaller enterprises to meet the needs of the local and regional market. This shows that globally, nationally and regionally, the world is facing a transformation that will certainly continue within the period 2022 – 2030. The change will also impose new challenges. This new process includes marketing, accepting orders, delivery, customer service, purchasing raw materials and materials for production and supply. In this situation, it is possible to strengthen e-commerce, which in addition to the individual consumer, will include economically active people, which may lead to the formation of a new payment system. In the current period of e-commerce, we have three types of integration: vertical integration of the final (user-oriented) web page in existing transaction systems, business integration of the company with web pages of customers, suppliers and intermediaries, and virtual markets (technology integration with partially modified ordering processes), deliveries

and customer service. This system must obtain a high level of security. Thus, in relation to the modern geoeconomic world, there are several problems, one is the framework of the functioning of open society, the second is the problem of security in it and thirdly the balance of spatial development (achieving effective regional development and forming many regional centers). Here is the place to emphasize that in the information society, business strategies are built on the relationship between companies, industries and raw materials, and not just on the company's advertising strategy. In today's geoeconomic race, there are always several influencing factors. Thus, the main factors that influence the building of successful e-business strategies are the positional factors - technology, services, markets and brand, as well as binding factors – leadership, infrastructure and organizational training. Moreover, the development of information technology in recent years has gained a specific connection with the consumer. Of course, globally we can see the advanced development in information technology of China, India, Indonesia, and others. The rise of China and other emerging economies in Asia, as well as the growth demonstrated by other “emerging economies”, outline a structural shift in the focus of growth in the global economy. We can characterize this process as digital (intelligent) shift of the regional development paradigm (O'Sullivan & Dooley, 2008).

Methodology and justification of the need for intelligent land management

The imposition of intelligent systems in the modern economy depends on the level of development of information technology. Methodologically, this means a set of procedures, techniques, tools and documentation aids that assist system developers in their efforts to implement a new information system. The methodology consists of stages, including sub-stages, which guide system developers in selecting the appropriate techniques for each stage of the project and assist them in planning, managing, controlling and evaluating projects for building information systems. It is very important to note that the methodology is not formed as a mechanical sum of the mentioned elements. It is usually based on a comprehensive understanding of the development of the organization, otherwise it would remain only a method or recipe, which in practice could not cover a single goal. The methodology must balance the technical with the human aspects in the process of information system development. In practice, this is very difficult to achieve and therefore the methodologies are divided into two main groups – on the one hand, are those methodologies whose goal is to fully automate the process of developing information systems and the information systems themselves. It is necessary to emphasize that in geoeconomic terms in the modeling of intelligent

systems the design and construction of any information system needs to take into account spatial development, available human capital, living standards, its educational structure and the possibility of sustainable development. The business process consistently covers part of these activities, through which a product or service is created for a specific customer or market. In geoeconomic terms, the process is a specific arrangement of activities represented by duration, resources, events and place, start, end and clearly defined entry and exit. It is important to note that intelligent systems must be built on a sufficiently stable foundation, which in practice determines the framework and level of the regional economy at the local level. The results largely depend on the way the approach is applied. Sufficient resources must be allocated to carry out the design activities in order to properly manage and control the tasks, so that any deviations from the plan can be identified and promptly overcome. Design should be seen as a flexible and iterative process, not strictly established.

The theoretical framework of innovations and innovative processes

Different definitions of the term “innovation” are known. As a complex phenomenon, it is the subject of attention by sociologists, lawyers, economists and psychologists. Authors who have thoroughly studied innovation conclude that all definitions could be summarized in six groups: new idea, impetus to new idea, invention, introduction of invention, idea different from existing forms, approach that disharmonizes with most of the prevailing behavior. According to O’Sullivan: “innovation is the process of making changes, large and small, radical and incremental, to products, processes, and services that results in the introduction of something new for the organization that adds value to customers and contributes to the knowledge store of the organization” (Rowe & Boise, 1974). Many authors as Rowe & Boise (1974), Dewar & Dutton (1986), Rogers (1995), Ufuah & Utterback (1997), Fischer (2001), Kogabayev & Maziliauskas (2017), Garcia & Calantone (2002), McDermott & O’Connor (2002), Pedersen & Dalum (2004), Manual (2004) have explored the strong relation between technology and market perspectives in the construction of their innovation theory framework. We can conclude that what is common in the different definitions is the creative nature of the process of searching for and implementing the new in all spheres and areas of human activity.

Innovation as a concept appeared in the early twentieth century. According to expert assessment, they are defined as production functions, or “new combinations” (production of new goods with new properties, change of technology and use of new equipment, opening of new markets, changes in the organization of production and its logistics, and others.). In practice, innovation is the introduction of a new or significantly improved product or production

process, a new marketing method or a new organizational method in commercial practice, the organization of workplaces or external relations. A minimal sign of an innovation is the requirement that the product, production process, marketing method or organization must be new or significantly improved for the practice of the company. This includes in the category of innovation products, production processes and methods that companies have created first and / or products, production processes and methods borrowed from other companies or organizations.

Different types of innovation are the result of different content and structure processes. Therefore, the solutions related to them require different in scope, accuracy and time horizon information obtained through different sources and channels.

Six features divide innovation into groups:

- According to the site where the novelty is realized;
- According to the degree of novelty and lag between the invention and its practical application;
- According to the degree of novelty for the company, the market and the consumers;
- According to the extent to which innovations change consumer behavior;
- According to the reason for creating and implementing the innovation;
- According to the degree of coercion to innovate.

A common feature of innovation is the fact that it must be implemented. A new or improved product is considered to have been introduced when it has entered the market. New production processes, marketing methods or organizational methods are considered as implemented when they are actually used in the company's activities. The nature of innovation activities in different companies is different. Some companies are engaged in very clear innovative projects – including the development and implementation of a new product, while others are mainly concerned with making new improvements in their products, production processes and operations. Both types of companies can be considered as innovative. In this context innovation can consist of the implementation of a single significant change or several less significant improving changes, which together form a significant change. The innovation process is defined as the preparation and implementation of innovation changes. The goal of the innovation process should focus on the use of available resources in the institution, in order to to increase and improve the creative processes for acquiring new knowledge and original and feasible ideas. The innovation process becomes mandatory for every company. It is a complex, creative, iterative process, among the stages of which there are direct and indirect ones. It is a set of interconnected and complementary activities, the implementation of which is carried out in a specific chronological

and logical sequence, depending on the source, purpose and type of innovation. The innovation process can be viewed from different viewpoints and with different levels of detail. But every innovation process is characterized by a beginning and an end. And although in the literature there are different opinions on the question of the boundaries and structure of the innovation process, a number of common features can be established in the individual structures, which form a generalized idea of this concept. The beginning of the innovation process is considered to be the activity directly related to the formulation, argumentation and concretization of the innovation idea (invention). The end of the innovation process is identified with the complete exhaustion of opportunities to disseminate the product or technology in other areas and enterprises, as well as to significantly improve their characteristics. Or this is the end of the diffusion phase of innovation (Rowe & Boise, 1974).

The innovation process made up of interconnected phases, forming a complex as a whole system, results in the realization of the innovation. It is associated with the transformation of the idea into a product through basic and applied research, development, marketing, production, etc. The effectiveness of the innovation process depends on many conditions, experiencing the influence of various factors. Studying and researching their action allow companies to stimulate the positive influence of some and ignore the negative impact of others. The choice of an innovation management model plays a key role in the success of the innovation process. In this respect it is necessary for each manager to determine which model is best applicable, considering both the external and internal environment of the organization. Innovation is different from the innovation process. Its success requires research, providing advanced development of the company, production with modern equipment and marketing. This company which has the ability to ensure the most efficient operation of the three areas can count on success in the competition.

Connectedness between innovations and trade

The definition of the term “trade” is an exchange of goods and services that can take place between two (bilateral) or more persons (multilateral) (Savov et al., 2000). According to the Cambridge dictionary the trade is “the activity of buying and selling, or exchanging, goods and/or services between people or countries” (Cambridge, 2021). In the modern society, trade also plays the role of a link between different economic sectors and regions. In trade, product innovation is the introduction of a good or service that is new or significantly improved in terms of its properties or uses. This includes significant improvement in specifications, components and materials, firmware, usability, or other functional features. New knowledge or technology can be used in product innovation, or it

can be based on new techniques or new combinations of existing knowledge or technology. The term “product” is used to denote both goods and services. The term “product innovation” includes the introduction of new goods and services, as well as the implementation of significant improvements in the functional or consumer characteristics of existing goods and services. Marketing innovation is the introduction of a new marketing method, including significant changes in the design or packaging of the product, its storage, advertising on the market, or in determining its selling price. Marketing innovations are aimed at better meeting the needs of the consumer, opening new markets, or gaining new positions for the company’s products in its market in order to increase sales. The ongoing increase in competition between retail chains creates a significant advantage for shoppers (Dewar & Dutton, 1986). They no longer want to stand in a queue. For many of them, the gathering of people in front of the cash registers at peak hours is a sufficient reason to give up shopping. In addition, it is perfectly understandable that consumers want to receive as much information as possible before the purchase about the goods offered, their properties, composition, and quality. And among other things, buyers are strongly influenced by changes in prices – the lower price or additional discount in many cases predetermines the choice of store. We conclude that the described situation above gives advantages to the commercial companies to use modern technologies and technical equipment. Here are some solutions that are already proving their benefits: mobile terminals or “shop without a queue”.

In Western Europe and the United States, the so-called Queue busting technology has been used for 10 years to solve the problem of the uneven loading of crates. The insufficient capacity of the cash registers during peak hours is compensated in the following way. As soon as there is a danger of a queue, the cashiers are assisted by employees who use mobile terminals to scan customers’ purchases while they wait their turn. The scanned goods are packed in a package for which a special label with a bar code is printed. Thus, the cashier only has to scan a bar code, issue a receipt and accept the customer’s money. This practice is not new in Bulgaria. The observations delivered information that best commerce practices have been adopted in our state form international trading chains. In this sense many innovations in commerce have been created in other countries and adopted in Bulgaria (Barzilska, 2012).

In order to make a purchase decision, customers often need a detailed consultation on various parameters of the product they are looking for. Sellers are not always able to provide such advice – sometimes they simply do not have the necessary information. As a result, the customer may remain dissatisfied with the quality of service and cancel the purchase. Guided Selling solutions help buyers make their product choices. This can be done on your own with the help

of an information kiosk located in the store or with the help of mobile terminals used by sales consultants (Rogers, 1995). Mobile Guided Selling solutions allow sellers to advise customers in detail on any characteristics of the goods, to select analogues, as well as to control stocks in the warehouse. There are already enough examples in practice around the world to confirm that Guided Selling solutions significantly increase the quality of service and customer satisfaction, which has a positive impact on store performance and increases sales (Ufua & Utterback, 1997). As already mentioned, flexible pricing policy is one of the tools to attract and retain customers. With the help of mobile devices, enabling the printing of price labels in real time, the managers of the trade halls solve the tasks for operational monitoring and revaluation of goods (Solis, 2015).

E-commerce's role increasing

E-commerce is a business transaction made in real time through telecommunications networks. This term has a wide application, including the virtual examination of goods, their selection for purchase and payment methods. In e-commerce there is no prior agreement between the parties – customer and seller. It is done over the Internet using all or a combination of technologies designed to exchange data, access data and record information. There are some new trends in e-commerce. As the boundaries between the physical and digital environments blur, the many channels will become more widespread. Each individual point of contact is important because it puts each individual piece of the puzzle into a complete picture. Knowing your customers' points of contact before purchasing will better inform you on how to promote your products and allocate your marketing budget. This growing trend in e-commerce is linked to what we have already mentioned about globalization. In addition to making sure that you strengthen your presence in global e-commerce, be sure to invest in infrastructures and technologies that will help you adapt to foreign buyers more conveniently (Fischer, 2001).

Responsive design. This is a commonly used word for design these days when people talk about new and innovative web technology developments. Responsive design is a way to design a website so that it automatically adjusts and reformats according to the user's screen resolution. By building an adaptive website using a convertible grid, images and CSS media queries, it can work on most devices and web browsers. Of course, in addition to all the benefits and advantages, Responsive design has some disadvantages related to resizing images, downloading data and speed.

Remarketing. Remarketing is a new technology in the field of e-commerce. It uses several methods to generate a lasting effect on the product. If you've ever noticed that the ads and apps that appear on the pages you visit online reflect your

interests a lot, then you're already facing remarketing. The danger with this type of marketing is the tendency of consumers to be annoyed by the "sinister" nature of the Internet ads that follow them. However, if consumers have not yet made their choice to buy a product, then the emerging mobile ad can make them make a particular purchase.

Omni – channel. Omni, the retail channel is the evolution of multi-channel retail, shopping through all possible shopping channels, ie. mobile internet devices, computers, television, radio, direct mail, catalogs, etc. A common sight in malls are customers standing in front of products while looking for their smartphones. Their purpose is to compare prices with other retailers. Alternatively, they may try to find a replacement product that better meets their needs (Yumurova, 2014).

Online magazines. eBay Inc. is an American internet company that owns www.ebay.com - an online trading website. The goods are offered in the form of auction or direct sale at a fixed price. Participants are both individuals and large companies. They all have the ability to sell or buy goods through eBay. The goods can be both new and used. eBay is known for the fact that the price of many goods is significantly lower than the market. The site has gained over 200 million users. The company announces that it will launch a new digital media "The Source Inside". This is the newest magazine on the market, which will publish information about the trends and desires of consumers and what the most sought-after items from more than 89 million active users of the online auction are, what the latest goods they are looking for are, buying and sell within the site. The content will focus on various topics of life, such as fashion, technology, cars, home and garden items and more.

Discount coupons. Google Inc. plans to offer discount printing coupons that allow consumers to shop at stores found through Google Maps. The company will adapt an existing tool for this purpose, which has so far been used only by business users. In this way, Google will offer a way to users of their services in the US to save on shopping from local chains of shops, restaurants, pizzerias and more. Google also plans to support merchants to create their own online coupons through a small program, thus enabling merchants who do not have websites to offer online promotions (Stoyanov, 2006).

Fingerprint shopping. With the help of the cameras on their mobile phones, customers scan special labels on the goods they are interested in. The camera is directed to a special bar code and after a few seconds, brief product information and price appear on the display. If the purchase is completed, the amount is calculated automatically and reappears on the display as a barcode. The customer has three options to pay: in cash, by card or with the help of a fingerprint.

EDI invoices. EDI has established itself in international business. In Bulgaria this is a modern and efficient system. It creates prerequisites for standardization

of document turnover and traceability of the process, reduction of data processing time, minimal human intervention and thus reduction of possible errors. A significant advantage of EDI is that it is practically a paperless way of exchanging documents. The use of this electronic communication provides a secure and fast exchange of information between the parties in the trade process.

E-commerce and social networks. By the end of 2021, about 50% of new customers of online stores will register in e-commerce resources through their social media accounts. The active use of social media accounts will be one of the determining factors influencing access management practices and identity data over the next few years. However, convenience is associated with additional risks - social networks often use weak authentication systems. Some e-commerce site operators allow social media registration, but use additional verification tools when trying to access personal information and make a transaction. Other e-commerce resources may decide to take action against the increased risks personally. If they can attract a significant number of customers through social networks, the growth of their business will enable them to transfer security efforts to payment system operators who have reliable means of fraud detection and risk management (Krasteva, 2013).

Intelligent development of the regions

In practice, the widespread penetration of modern information and communication technologies in all spheres of the economy, society and everyday life has created the phenomenon of “information (otherwise: digital, network) society” (Garcia & Calantone, 2002). Gradually, in this sufficiently “amorphous” concept, some constituent elements began to be concretized and systematized: e-commerce, e-government, e-management, e-health, e-education, etc. This practically necessitated modernizing the regional development tools, although network is different. Combination of information society, information and communication technologies, economy, and public management improves connectivity and has transformed a model into intelligent development of regions. However, according to the new systematization, in the numerous components of the “information society” the mechanisms that manage the processes in it are separated. The set of these mechanisms is identified as Electronic Governance and in spatial and territorial context it can be called geoeconomic and intelligent (information) development of the world or „geoelectronic government“. The following definition could be accepted with few reservations: on national territory. In this context, e-government is not just an extension and improvement of conventional management technologies. Its goals are not just to improve management, facilitate staffing, cost savings, etc. This is a new philosophy and paradigm of management related to intelligent development. In addition, the

international digital economy has grown to enormous proportions, operating in the context of an inconsistent and incomplete governance framework integrated at multilateral, regional and local levels. Relying on business expertise on some aspects of cross-border digital commerce fuels interest in filling regulatory gaps, aligning requirements and facilitating digital commerce, while maintaining an appropriate balance of interests. It is important to emphasize that geo-e-government shows the scope, dynamics and transformative potential of digital commerce and at the same time the need to build an improved regulatory framework for liberal, thin, rule-based market access. This is important for fostering innovation and sustainable economic growth and enforcing the geo-e-governance model globally and locally.

It is important to understand that the information society refers to the change in lifestyle, respectively it influences the development of the public sector and in particular the transnational corporations and other economically active persons for regional and global leadership (McDermott & O'Connor, 2002). Thus, it can be assumed that geoelectronic government is usually divided into two main parts in accordance with the areas of action – public and corporate. In this direction the foundation of geoelectronic control rests on the foundation can also be interpreted with the introduction of e-government, which can be one of the main elements of public e-government together with other components, such as: e-democracy, e-commerce (in its part related to state and branch regulation), e-public procurement, e-health, e-learning (Pedersen & Dalum, 2004). It is necessary to emphasize that public administration sets the rules of economics and politics. In practice, it depends on the perimeter of economic activity or the relevance of political decisions. This gives us reason from a purely geoeconomic point of view to assume that geoelectronic management must rest on the foundation of producer dominance and consumer behavior. In this term the geoelectronic management is strongly related to innovation practices. Innovation is incorporation of technologies in public and corporate management which led to new economy and intelligent development of regions. This new economy and management of the industry increase the production potential for both the internal market and for export. And this process is related to the strategic high technologies development and the high added value industries; market sharing; targeted strategy for investments in loss-making industries to ensure the ultimate dominance in the industrial sphere (Petrov, 2015). With regard to digital commerce, the nation state must join existing policies of high standards or formulate new regional and bilateral policies that offer openness to the digital market with liberal, streamlined and regulatory safeguards. Further experience with free data regulations and rules, non-discrimination for digital products, informed consumer consent models for privacy and source code protection,

among others, would help to establish on-the-spot facts about costs and benefits. This can improve the prospects for the possible multilateralism of such elements, as well as promote regional development.

Conclusion

In the conditions of dynamically changing economic environment, innovations are among the most important elements for the successful development of commercial enterprises. The modern world requires the introduction of new innovative solutions. Many commercial companies are preferred precisely because of the innovation that brings them to the forefront of other operators in the same market. Buyers prefer these businesses precisely because of the convenience they offer such as easier shopping or receiving information. Innovation in trade plays a key role today. They impose both national and global leadership in customer choice. That is why companies are introducing new technological solutions, striving to be the first on the market. In addition, to enter the new environment, it is necessary to build the necessary infrastructural environment and architecture of the new economy of the 21st century. The world is facing a new marketing challenge with a territorial dimension. When looking at geo-e-government as a system, economic actors have traditionally tended to support the development of a global non-discriminatory set of rules that support market openness and regulatory transparency, while imposing discipline to tackle harmful actions and costly economic distortions. Yet the imposition of the new geo-electronic system at the global and regional level is managed in a rather fragmented and incomplete way by institutions at the global level. It certainly needs a level of security, but not discriminatory market principles.

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